Irish Historical Studies, xxx, no. 120 (Nov. 1997)

'A moral insurrection': faction fighters, public demonstrations and the O'Connellite campaign, 1828

During a twelve-week period in the late summer of 1828 upwards of a quarter of a million people participated in at least sixty mass demonstrations in the south-west of Ireland. Appearing to erupt spontaneously in response to Daniel O'Connell's historic victory in the County Clare election in early July, these gatherings grew in size and complexity over the succeeding weeks; by late September jubilant but well-ordered assemblies of twenty and thirty thousand people — many marching in identical green uniforms and with military precision behind bands and colourful banners — were taking place simultaneously in several County Tipperary towns to support O'Connell's crusade for Catholic emancipation.

Political demonstrations on this scale were virtually unprecedented outside the province of Ulster. While processions and large rallies had sometimes been used to honour important politicians during parliamentary elections, and while they had long been part of civic, military and religious pageantry, they had never before been staged in such a co-ordinated and prolonged fashion. What made these spectacles particularly remarkable, however, was that their participants were mainly drawn from the very lowest ranks of rural society and represented groups which had hitherto been excluded from the political process. The novelty of such people marching so often with uniforms and other military regalia caused widespread bewilderment and alarm. Journalists and magistrates liberally sprinkled their descriptions of the meetings with phrases such as 'novel', 'portentous', 'unprecedented', 'frightful', and 'the strangest scene ever witnessed'. One of them observed that had such displays taken place even a few years earlier, they 'would not only have been deemed factious but treasonable'.[1] As the meetings swelled, many observers thought them to be the harbingers of a mass uprising. 'We tremble at every wind that blows from Ireland', proclaimed an editorial in *The Times* at the close of September,

> and our fears are outstripped by every day's communication, so much more terrible is the reality when it reaches us than our wildest fantasies has anticipated. The island is on the brink of open war. The array of mounted and regimented peasantry, their endless numbers and complete organization, have manifestly impressed as much alarm upon the minds of the civilized and enlightened Roman Catholics as they ought to do on that of the Government of Great Britain.[2]

[1] *Clonmel Advertiser*, 17 Sept. 1828.
[2] *The Times*, 29 Sept. 1828.

Historians of this period have been more equivocal than contemporaries in their appraisals of the demonstrations. Some have simply ignored them, implying that they were of no consequence to the great events being played out between the leading statesmen of the day. Others have treated them as ephemeral curiosities — random, disorganised popular outbursts taking place off the main political stage which suddenly heightened tensions at a crucial point in the campaign for Catholic emancipation and then, just as suddenly, subsided. Still others have suggested that, far from being spontaneous, the meetings were the handiwork of O'Connell and his colleagues in the Catholic Association, who concocted them in order to persuade the British government that defying the popular will on the issue of emancipation was potentially dangerous.[3] Viewed in this way, the demonstrations were mainly important as precursors of the celebrated 'monster meetings' that the Repeal Association sponsored a decade and a half later.[4]

Whatever their conclusions, those who have written about these assemblies have done so mainly from the perspective of the accepted centres of political power. None have considered the demonstrations themselves — let alone the perceptions of their participants — to be subjects worthy of serious analysis.[5] The focus of the paper that follows is more provincial than metropolitan; more fixed upon the villages and towns where the demonstrations took place than upon the Dublin meeting rooms of the Catholic Association or the floor of the House of Commons. It interprets the gatherings as performative events through which ordinary people articulated views about themselves and their expectations. It is therefore concerned as much with the cultural as with the political meaning of the meetings.

[3]The three most recent studies of the Catholic emancipation movement do not treat the meetings in extensive detail: Fergus O'Ferrall, *Catholic emancipation: Daniel O'Connell and the birth of Irish democracy* (Dublin, 1985); Brian Jenkins, *The era of emancipation: British government of Ireland, 1812–1830* (Kingston & Montreal, 1988); Wendy Hinde, *Catholic emancipation: a shake to men's minds* (Oxford, 1992). Oliver MacDonagh's monumental biography of O'Connell, *The hereditary bondsman: Daniel O'Connell, 1775–1829* (London, 1988) does not mention the gatherings.

[4]Gary Owens, 'Constructing the repeal spectacle: monster meetings and people power in pre-Famine Ireland' in Maurice R. O'Connell (ed.), *People power: proceedings of the third annual Daniel O'Connell workshop* (Dublin, 1993), pp 80–93; idem, 'Nationalism without words: symbolism and ritual behaviour in the repeal "monster meetings" of 1843–5' in J. S. Donnelly, jr, and Kerby Miller (eds), *Irish popular culture, 1650–1850* (Dublin, 1998). For a stimulating analysis of the forms of popular political action in the British Isles, including mass gatherings, see Charles Tilly, *Popular contention in Great Britain, 1758–1834* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995).

[5]However, Thomas G. McGrath provides a good analysis of the demonstrations in one county in his 'Interdenominational relations in pre-Famine Tipperary' in William Nolan and Thomas G. McGrath (eds), *Tipperary: history and society* (Dublin, 1985), pp 256–87. For a descriptive account of the demonstrations in Tipperary see Donal A. Murphy, 'Emancipation and the Tipperary marches, 1828' in *Nenagh Guardian*, 24 Mar.–30 June 1990 (9 pts).

I

News of O'Connell's stunning election victory in Ennis on 5 July 1828 touched off spontaneous celebrations among Catholics across Ireland, but those which took place in north-east Munster were particularly noteworthy. First, this region remained alive with colourful public demonstrations for over three months, whereas festivities in other parts of Ireland sputtered out after a day or two. Second, as the meetings continued they became bigger, more widely spread, more elaborate, and more aggressive in tone.

The initial gatherings occurred in scattered communities in Limerick, Tipperary and Clare. Less than forty-eight hours after O'Connell's victory, for example, people living in the countryside around Croom descended upon that village to hold an open-air rally, 'the men carrying green boughs and the women with green ribbons or laurels in their caps'.[6] When the residents of Shanagolden heard the news from Ennis, they flocked to a special commemoration service in their chapel, after which they visited local cemeteries. There they draped boughs of laurel over tombstones and suspended garlands of flowers and evergreen from trees to honour those friends and relatives who 'had not lived to witness the regeneration of their Country'. That night the hills surrounding the village blazed with bonfires and burning crosses thirty feet high.[7]

Similar events were reported in over two dozen communities in the region during the next four weeks. This was almost certainly a fraction of the actual number. Magistrates in Limerick, for example, later claimed that 'nightly meetings' were being held near the city and that parades were taking place 'every day' somewhere in Counties Tipperary, Clare and Limerick. If correct, such reports suggest far greater activity than has hitherto been assumed. Whatever their actual number, these early gatherings were similar in certain respects: they were not particularly large (although one or two of them drew crowds reported at between 4,000 and 6,000, most numbered between 500 and 1,500); they were concentrated mainly in east Limerick and a handful of villages in north and east Tipperary; and they were loosely structured, impromptu events that showed little preparation or planning. All of this changed during the month of August.[8]

Whereas the initial celebrations followed no particular schedule, they soon settled into a regular weekly pattern. From early August onwards, almost all of them were held on Sundays. That, combined with the gradual completion of the harvest towards the end of the month, gave growing numbers of country folk the opportunity to attend. Newspapers and local magistrates described increasingly large turnouts: 10,000 gathered at Cappawhite on 10 August; the same number congregated in Borrisoleigh a

[6] *Dublin Evening Post*, 12 July, 5 Aug. 1828 (henceforth *D.E.P.*).

[7] *Limerick Evening Post and Clare Sentinel*, 11 July 1828 (henceforth *L.E.P./C.S.*), reprint of a report in *Cork Southern Reporter*.

[8] T. P. Vokes to Francis Leveson-Gower, 4 Sept. 1828 (N.A.I., Chief Secretary's Office, Registered Papers, 1828, V–10 (henceforth C.S.O., R.P.)); George Drought to William Gregory, 8 Sept. 1828 (ibid., D–28); Maj. Samson Carter to William Gregory, 12 July 1828 (ibid., C–32).

fortnight later; on the following Sunday a massive 20,000 to 40,000 people thronged the streets and public square of Thurles, the diocesan centre and 'Catholic' capital of Tipperary.[9]

In August as well, the meetings shifted eastward into Tipperary.[10] As they did so they increasingly assumed a more urban demeanour, centring on the dozen larger towns of that county. The rallies also began to display signs of more careful organisation. Participants in the Borrisoleigh demonstration 'moved in a vast procession which covered miles of the country in perfect order, marshalled, disciplined and regimented'.[11] Thousands of them had reportedly travelled through the night from more than twenty miles away to take part.[12] The Thurles meeting began precisely at 3 p.m. with the arrival of 15,000 men, many of them on horseback and parading three abreast to the accompaniment of marching bands. Large crosses and flags displayed O'Connell's portrait or inscriptions such as 'God Save the King' and 'Peace and Unity'.[13]

In smaller communities these occasions also assumed a more formal structure. A good example was the colourful spectacle that a Tipperary magistrate named Richard Long encountered on a road near Clonoulty on 17 August. At the head of a large procession, Long reported, rode a young man on a cart full of bread and jugs of whiskey. The youth wore a woman's shawl draped over one shoulder like a highland plaid; coloured ribbons dangled from his shirt sleeves and his hat was festooned with printed handkerchiefs, feathers and more ribbons. A short distance behind him came the leading columns of the cavalcade: five hundred men, all of them sporting similar decorations, marched in alternate ranks of horse and foot to the accompaniment of fifes and tambourines. Many of them held aloft large green flags or painted boards depicting harps, crosses and O'Connell's likeness. In the midst of the parade 'a space of about ten paces was kept open where a single man marched carrying a large Crucifix which to me appeared to be covered with black crepe or ribbons'. Behind the whole cortège stretched a formless array of men, women and children that numbered in the thousands. Everyone in the gaudy procession appeared to be in good humour, but, to the magistrate's surprise, none showed signs of drunkenness or belligerence as was often the case at country gatherings. 'Many whom I knew saluted me,' he said, and 'I heard but one single word from among the crowd, and that was the word "Liberty" '.[14]

[9]Abstract of reports of outrages, Aug. 1828 (P.R.O., HO 100/222/312); deposition of Constable Patrick Carroll, 27 Aug. 1828 (N.A.I., C.S.O., R.P. 1828, T–24); *Tipperary Free Press*, 3 Sept. 1828 (henceforth *T.F.P.*); *Freeman's Journal*, 4, 6 Sept. 1828 (henceforth *F.J.*); *Waterford Mirror*, 6 Sept. 1828.

[10]Of 38 meetings known to have taken place in August and September, 24 occurred in County Tipperary.

[11]Report of Richard Lalor Sheil to the Catholic Association (*D.E.P.*, 2 Sept. 1828).

[12]*The Times*, 29 Aug. 1828. The reporter mistakenly transposed the names Borrisoleigh and Thurles. See also Richard Lalor Sheil's report to the Catholic Association of his experiences at the Borrisoleigh meeting (*D.E.P.*, 2 Sept. 1828).

[13]*T.F.P.*, 3 Sept. 1828; *F.J.*, 4 Sept. 1828; *Waterford Mirror*, 6 Sept. 1828.

[14]Long to Leveson-Gower, 29 Aug. 1828 (N.A.I., C.S.O., R.P. 1828, L–16).

As the meetings moved into September they developed two new features. First, they were co-ordinated to occur in specific parts of Tipperary on the same day. Organisers focused initially upon towns in the central parts of the county — Cashel on 7 September, Cahir, Killenaule and Templemore on the 14th. They then moved to towns along the northern and southern borders — Clonmel, Tipperary, Nenagh and Roscrea on the 21st, Clogheen, Ballingarry and Borrisokane on the 28th. The aim was to blanket Tipperary before extending the meetings into neighbouring counties and possibly into other parts of Ireland. As one observer confidently predicted, 'You will hear in a few weeks the marches and counter-marches, the discipline and the uniforms, of the peasantry of Waterford, Kerry and Cork. The county of Kilkenny . . . will imitate its neighbours, and the flame will spread to Wexford, Wicklow and the adjacent counties.'[15]

A second characteristic of the later demonstrations was their increasingly militant tone. This was particularly evident in the visual devices that marchers displayed, especially their apparel. Participants in the first meetings had decorated themselves with whatever materials came to hand: shawls, printed handkerchiefs bearing O'Connell's image, ribbons, feathers and green leaves. By September new and more ominous-looking costumes appeared in the form of green military-style jackets and other martial clothing.[16] Demonstrators not only dressed like soldiers, they also began to behave like them. One teenage marcher boasted to a German visitor that he and his friends 'had all green jackets (for every man must get one as well he can) with an inscription on the arm'. They had chosen their own officers, he continued: 'they drill us and we can march and wheel already like the redcoats'.[17] A local landlord who witnessed the Clogheen demonstration was struck by its military tone, especially the way in which some 2,000 horsemen and an immense number of foot paraded three and four abreast in perfect order, 'wheeling at times without the least confusion'.[18]

Officials in Dublin Castle and Whitehall watched these events with mounting concern. Ireland's governors had ignored the earlier gatherings on the presumption that they would eventually peter out, but their inertia only gave the demonstrators greater confidence. They now saw themselves facing a major crisis. 'The subject of these meetings has a more urgent claim on the attention of Government than any other connected with Ireland,' wrote the Lord Lieutenant, Anglesey, to Sir Robert Peel on 18 September. He repeated his warning two days later, this time announcing that the assemblies had become so frequent, so large and so menacing that he could no longer permit them to take place without endangering the public peace.[19] On 1 October the government issued a proclamation prohibiting future

[15] *The Times*, 27 Sept., 7 Oct. 1828.

[16] See especially Maj. A. Lane to the earl of Wiltshire, 25 Sept. 1828 (N.A.I., State of the Country papers, 2883/21 (henceforth S.O.C.)); deposition of G. Fitzgerald, 27 Sept. 1828 (N.A.I., C.S.O., R.P. 1828, F-16); *Clonmel Advertiser*, 24 Sept. 1828.

[17] Hermann Ludwig, Fürst von Pückler-Muskau, *Tour in England, Ireland and France in the years 1828 & 1829* (London, 1832), ii, 8.

[18] Lord Lismore to Lt-Col. Gosset, 29 Sept. 1828 (B.L., Add. MS 40336, f. 7).

[19] Anglesey to Peel, 18, 20 Sept. 1828 (B.L., Add. MS 40326, ff 36–43, 107).

meetings and, as a special precaution, committed five-sixths of the infantry serving in the United Kingdom to Ireland.[20]

The leaders of the Catholic Association also were worried that the demonstrations might lead to violence, and on 27 September they issued a formal request to the people of Tipperary to discontinue their marches. From his home in Kerry, Daniel O'Connell added a personal plea. These actions, combined with the persuasive efforts of a few respected people living in areas where gatherings were scheduled to take place, brought an end to the meetings. Except for a brief period at the height of the tithe war in the summer of 1832, the south of Ireland would not see mass political displays on this scale again until the famous repeal monster meetings of 1843 and 1845.

II

One of the most puzzling features of the 1828 demonstrations concerns the region where they took place. It is not immediately clear, for example, why crowds in the tens of thousands felt compelled to turn out repeatedly over a twelve-week period in a single corner of south-west Ireland. If, as some have implied, they did so simply to display their enthusiasm for O'Connell's cause, it is difficult to understand why Catholics in other parts of the country did not feel a similar compulsion.[21] And if, as others have suggested, the leaders of the Catholic Association devised and organised the north Munster meetings, it must be asked why they selected only this section of Ireland to hold rallies.[22] Why did they not target Cork or parts of Leinster, particularly Dublin and its immediate vicinity, where support for the association was the strongest?[23]

The demonstrations were confined to this area for reasons that had less to do with the activities of the Catholic Association or elation over O'Connell's victory — heartfelt as that was — than with the popular political culture of the localities concerned. While the emancipation campaign formed the general context for the meetings and fired the imaginations of the participants, they owed their beginnings to another source: the activities

[20]Correspondence between government officials about the demonstrations and the steps they took to deal with them can be found in B.L., Add. MSS 40326 and 40335. See also Stanley H. Palmer, *Police and protest in England and Ireland, 1780–1850* (Cambridge, 1988), pp 275–6.

[21]See, for example. Michael MacDonagh, *Daniel O'Connell and the story of Catholic emancipation* (Dublin & Cork, 1929), p. 172; James A. Reynolds, *The Catholic emancipation crisis in Ireland, 1823–1829* (New Haven & London, 1954), pp 149–50; Galen Broeker, *Rural disorder and police reform in Ireland, 1812–36* (London & Toronto, 1970), pp 181–4; O'Ferrall, *Catholic emancipation*, pp 227–8.

[22]S. J. Connolly, 'Mass politics and sectarian conflict, 1823–30' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v: *Ireland under the union, I: 1801–70* (Oxford, 1990), p. 104; Hinde, *Catholic emancipation*, p. 100.

[23]O'Ferrall, *Catholic emancipation*, p. 67; Kevin Whelan, 'The regional impact of Irish Catholicism, 1700–1850' in William J. Smyth and Kevin Whelan (eds), *The common ground: essays on the historical geography of Ireland* (Cork, 1988), pp 264–6.

of fighting factions whose feuds had helped to give this area a reputation for public violence.

Though faction feuds were common throughout Ireland from at least the late eighteenth century to the eve of the Great Famine, they were particularly intense in north and east Munster. Here was where the extensive Caravat and Shanavest factions clashed in the first years of the nineteenth century and where their lineal descendants, the Three Year Olds and the Four Year Olds, carried out their brutal wars from 1818 onwards. This was also the killing ground for countless smaller factions such as the Coffeys and Reiskevellas in north-west Tipperary and north-east Limerick, the Darrigs and Cummings in north Tipperary, the Magpies and Blackhens in central Tipperary, and the Poleens and Gows in south Tipperary and north Waterford.[24]

Factions are best known for the violence that they inflicted upon each other in their pitched battles at markets, fairs and other special occasions. Their quotidian activities are less familiar. Many factions behaved as local mafias, protecting members from prosecution by intimidating juries and witnesses. Before the development of a centralised constabulary in the 1820s some allegedly enjoyed the patronage of local magistrates who turned a blind eye to their crimes in return for the free help of their members in digging potatoes, cutting turf and saving hay. Factions also behaved as vigilantes who chased down criminals operating in their neighbourhoods. Their vendettas sometimes saw faction members seal off whole towns where their opponents lived, causing food prices within them to soar.[25]

Despite — or thanks to — their association with violence, corruption and intimidation, factions commanded the acquiescence of many among the Catholic rural population. Their members were heroes in the eyes of some: 'Here's three and four years [olds] and O'Connell!' was a jibe that children in County Limerick delighted in hurling at village constables.[26] To one magistrate, faction rivalries were especially pernicious because they provided the lower orders with leaders and discipline and gave them dangerous

[24]On the prevalence of factions in this region and their activities see Paul E. W. Roberts, 'Caravats and Shanavests: Whiteboyism and faction fighting in east Munster, 1802–11' in Samuel Clark and James S. Donnelly, jr (eds), *Irish peasants: violence and political unrest, 1780–1914* (Manchester, 1983), pp 64–101; James S. Donnelly, jr, 'Factions in pre-Famine Ireland' in Audrey S. Eyler and Robert F. Garratt (eds), *The uses of the past: essays on Irish culture* (Newark & London, 1988), pp 113–27; Patrick O'Donnell, *The Irish faction fighters of the 19th century* (Dublin, 1975), *passim*; Patrick J. O'Connor, 'The maturation of town and village life in County Limerick, 1700–1900' in Smyth & Whelan (eds), *Common ground*, pp 153–5; Caoimhín Ó Danachair, 'Faction fighting in County Limerick' in *N. Munster Antiq. Jn.*, x, no. 1 (1966), pp 47–54.

[25]Testimonies of Maj.-Gen Richard Bourke and Rev. John Kelly, House of Commons, *Select committee on the state of Ireland: report and evidence*, pp 325, 397, H.C. 1825 (129) viii; Maj. Thomas Powell to William Lamb, 26 Oct. 1827 (N.A.I., S.O.C., 2834/47); Lord Portarlington to Sir William Gosset, 15 Feb. 1833 (N.A.I., C.S.O., R.P. 1833/244).

[26]George Bennett to Charles Bennett, 15 July 1828 (N.A.I., C.S.O., R.P. 1828, V–9).

notions about their own power.[27] Any political organisation wishing to establish itself in the region was necessarily obliged to compete with these groups for a share of popular support. This was a challenge confronting the Catholic Association as it began to penetrate the countryside following its creation in 1823 — a challenge made all the more formidable because the power of the factions appeared to be growing at precisely this same time.

Factional activity was always intense in Munster, but it was never constant. After peaking during the Caravat–Shanavest disturbances of 1802–11, it subsided for a few years. It surged for a brief period after 1818, but receded again until around 1824, when, once more, it swelled dramatically. This is reflected in the reports of 'riots' (a large proportion of which were faction fights) that regularly streamed into Dublin Castle from provincial magistrates during the 1820s. Between 1824 and 1828 the number of reported incidents rocketed from 358 to 1,001.[28] As faction fighting intensified, so did the level of violence. When O'Connell reported to his colleagues in 1828 that no fewer than twenty lives had been lost in faction battles during the previous four years, he almost certainly underestimated the extent of the carnage: nearly half that number alone had been killed in a single clash at Dromin, County Limerick, in 1825.[29] Two decades later a resident of Roscrea, County Tipperary, looked back upon the mid-1820s as a time when 'there was not a townland or a village that could not boast of a powerful faction' and fighting had become common to 'every town, village and fair green in the county'.[30]

The attitude of the Catholic Association toward this revival of the factions was predictable. One association leader, the historian Thomas Wyse, later summarised the thinking of his colleagues in 1828:

> These factions, which had at various times so materially disturbed the peace of the country and interfered with the constitutional system of the Association, began to reappear in the counties of Clare, Limerick, and Tipperary, under a variety of absurd designations . . . *It was of the utmost moment to repress them before they extended so far into the south as to create a counter-power of uncertain and undefined principle and intentions to the power of the Association.*[31]

Their programme of 'repression' was, in reality, one of co-option. They hoped to coax faction leaders into the formal network of the Catholic

[27]Testimony of Francis Blackburne, *Minutes of evidence taken before the select committee appointed to inquire into the disturbances in Ireland . . . 13 May–18 June 1824*, pp 18–19, H.C. 1825 (20), vii.

[28]*Summary statements of persons charged with criminal offences, committed to the different gaols in Ireland, for trial at the assizes and sessions, during the last seven years . . . 1822–1828*, p. 7, H.C. 1829 (256), xxii, 433.

[29]*D.E.P.*, 12 July 1828; *L.E.P./C.S.*, 30 Sept. 1828.

[30]*Tipperary Vindicator*, 18 Jan. 1845. See also the recollections of a long-time Tipperary resident, William Lundon, M.P., as reported in *Kerryman*, 5 Feb. 1910. The State of the Country and Outrage papers in the National Archives reflect an unmistakable quickening of factional activity from 1824 onwards.

[31]Thomas Wyse, *Historical sketch of the late Catholic Association* (London, 1829), i, 409 (my italics).

Association and, in the process, to persuade them and their followers to end their violence in the interests of the crusade for Catholic emancipation. In so doing, the association would neutralise its rivals while simultaneously demonstrating that it had the moral authority to control an unruly populace — something that the government and magistracy had been patently unable to do for decades.[32] An opportunity to act upon this strategy presented itself at the time of O'Connell's decision to stand in the Clare election.

Only hours after he announced his candidacy O'Connell and his lieutenants met to form a quasi-chivalric order known as the Order of Liberators of Ireland. One of its central purposes was 'to prevent the future occurrence of feuds and riots at markets, fairs and patrons, and to reconcile the parties and factions which have hitherto disgraced many parts of Ireland'.[33] Five days later O'Connell found a chance to act upon this proposal as he made his way from Dublin to the hustings in Ennis. When his entourage reached the town of Toomevara in Tipperary, it was stopped by a jubilant crowd of a few thousand 'bearing boughs of palm, laurel and sycamore in their hands and shouting for the "Man of the People" '. Two factions, the Blackhens and the Magpies, dominated this area, and O'Connell made their long-running quarrel the subject of his remarks:

> I understand there are some party feuds amongst you, and that there are two parties named Blackhens and Magpies who fight among themselves merely because they bear these foolish names. Have you not enemies enough to contend with, and not be fighting amongst yourselves? Be good friends, forget past quarrels, live in peace with each other. And now promise me you will go home this day, both Magpies and Blackhens, and be henceforth on good terms!

His listeners responded with robust cheers, and one reporter heard many of them shout 'We will! We will!'[34] True to their word, the warring groups around Toomevara made peace with each other a few days later, and, as news of O'Connell's victory in Ennis began to spread through the region, dozens of other factions did the same.

Public ceremonies of one kind or another accompanied each of these reconciliation agreements. The Shanagolden and Croom demonstrations in early July were, in fact, not so much celebrations of O'Connell's election as observances of factional armistices. Shanagolden had seen savage fighting between no fewer than four factions, the O'Briens, McMahons, Griffins and Sheahans. When people gathered in four local cemeteries after attending a special chapel service, it was to honour friends and relatives who had fallen in factional wars. Thus, wrote one observer, former enemies met 'over the tombs of their Fathers . . . embraced each other and swore on the sacred turf an eternal friendship and mutual oblivion of all past injuries'.[35] The gaily decorated people who strode arm-in-arm into Croom on 7 July were mem-

[32] Ibid., pp 408–18; McGrath, 'Interdenominational relations' p. 262; also *Annual Reg., 1828*, pp 134–8.
[33] *D.E.P.*, 26 June 1828.
[34] Ibid., 1 July 1828.
[35] *L.E.P./C.S.*, 11 July 1828; O'Donnell, *Irish faction fighters*, pp 67–77.

bers of the Three Year Old and Four Year Old factions and their womenfolk. Congregating around an enormous bonfire that evening, the former enemies embraced each other 'like brothers, and binding themselves by the most solemn promises to forget their former dissensions, [they swore] that in future there should be known in the country but one party'.[36]

The scores of other so-called 'pacification', 'reconciliation' or 'league of peace' demonstrations that occurred in the region during July and early August were variations on this same theme. Thus on 12 July a procession of Three Year Olds marched out from the townland of Athlacca, County Limerick, to meet their enemies, the Four Year Olds, who advanced towards them from nearby Dromin. Somewhere between the two communities the groups confronted each other in the way they traditionally did before a fight, but instead of falling to blows they raised three cheers for Ireland, O'Connell, Dromin and Athlacca and 'rushed into each others arms and exchanged the kiss of peace'. To the accompaniment of pipers and fiddlers, they paraded arm-in-arm back to Athlacca as a single group behind a garland that bore a likeness of O'Connell. That evening faction members were part of a large crowd that gathered around a bonfire in the village to hear a speech from the local priest, Father James O'Regan. At the end of his remarks he directed everyone to raise their hands and eyes towards heaven and swear to remain at peace forever.[37]

More than fifty years later William Robert Le Fanu vividly recalled his boyhood experience of joining with the Reiskevella faction as they descended upon Newport to celebrate the truce they had made with their enemies the Coffeys:

> One of these great marchings, which passed close to our house I saw, and indeed took part in it; for a friendly peasant induced me (it was nothing to me) to march some way in the procession carrying a green bough in my hand . . . They marched six deep, in military order, with music and banners, each man carrying, as an emblem of peace, a green bough; the procession was nearly two miles long. On its arrival at Newport the meeting was celebrated with much joy and whisky, and, in the presence of the priests, a treaty of perpetual peace was established, and never from that day did those factions meet again for battle. Similar reconciliations took place all over the country, and faction fighting practically ended.[38]

III

The remarkable spectacle of dozens of factions rapidly ending their feuds and celebrating their truces in such dramatic ways took most outsiders by

[36] *D.E.P.*, 12 July, 5 Aug. 1828.

[37] A week later the two factions and their supporters repeated their ritual meeting, this time returning to Dromin for a final celebration: *L.E.P./C.S.*, 15 July 1828; William Smith to Maj. W. Miller, 21 July 1828 (P.R.O., HO 100/222/481); H. Woodburn to T. P. Vokes, 21 July 1828 (N.A.I., C.S.O., R.P. 1828, V–9); Chief Constable Doolan to Vokes, 18 July 1828 (ibid.); Doolan to Maj. W. Miller, 20 July 1828 (P.R.O., HO 100/222/479); *Clonmel Herald*, 19 July 1828.

[38] W. R. Le Fanu, *Seventy years of Irish life* (London, 1893), pp 34–5.

surprise. A correspondent for *The Times* proclaimed it to be nothing less than 'a moral insurrection, an insurrection which, to an Englishman, must appear most extraordinary. These masses of peasantry are moving in every direction, making peace.'[39] The few anti-O'Connellite newspapers which bothered to report the first demonstrations were at a loss to explain what was happening, though they were convinced that something sinister was afoot. The *Clonmel Herald* was typical, assuring its readers that the 'rabble' who turned out for the celebrations were merely 'poor dupes' being lured into bloody rebellion by 'green breeches Liberators' just as their forebears had done in 1798.[40] Local magistrates were equally apprehensive. One of them wrote from Clonmel in late July:

> It is impossible to view without suspicion and distrust the organised assemblages of such numerous bodies composed of men who have been long in the habit . . . of engaging in desperate conflicts against each other, but who seem now agreed to postpone or forget all private differences and unite their numbers and their efforts in the promotion of one Common object.[41]

Many were suspicious because the process of pacification had come without warning at a time when factional activity appeared to be at an all-time high. The quietness that settled so suddenly upon the countryside seemed ominous to one observer:

> At no period for the last ten, I would say, twenty years, has Ireland enjoyed such profound repose as she does at this day . . . If the alarmists knew their craft, they would augur evil — not from petty overt acts at fairs — not from a battle between two adverse factions and a row between the police and the peasantry — but from the gradual diminution of these feuds.[42]

Not everyone was alarmed, however. The sudden explosion of mass gatherings amazed but also gratified supporters of the Catholic Association. As one nationalist newspaper assured its readers, these events were merely 'offerings' and 'tributes' to O'Connell for his 'glorious triumph' at the polls, and to a degree they were correct.[43] Faction members and their supporters *were* almost certainly motivated by the belief that they were assisting in a righteous campaign which, if successful, would bring innumerable improvements to their lives. Antoine Ó Reachtabhra (Raftery) captured the feeling of boundless expectation that prevailed among Catholics during these weeks in his poem 'Bua Uí Chonaill' ('O'Connell's victory'):

[39] *The Times*, 29 Aug. 1828.

[40] *Clonmel Herald*, 2 Aug. 1828. See also *Morning Herald*, 30 Sept. 1828, and the poem 'Pacification' which lampooned the ending of the feuds, *Waterford Mail*, 30 July 1828.

[41] Maj. W. Miller to William Gregory, 23 July 1828 (N.A.I., C.S.O., R.P. 1828, M–59). See also Maj. Samson Carter to Gregory, 12 July 1828 (ibid., C–32).

[42] *The Times*, 31 July 1828.

[43] *L.E.P./C.S.*, 15 July 1828.

Gunnaí is lámhach is tinte cnámha,
Beidh againn amárach, is tá sé in am,
Ó fuair Ó Conaill bua ar an namhaid.
Aibeoidh bláth is beidh meas ar chrann.

[Guns and firing and bonfires
Shall we have tomorrow, and it is time,
Since O'Connell has gained victory over the enemy
Blossoms shall ripen and there shall be fruit on the trees.][44]

But it is also certain that in reconciling their differences faction members were not merely making innocent 'tributes' or forswearing violence altogether. On the contrary, they believed that they were preparing for an even greater conflict; that when O'Connell urged them to make peace among themselves he was really summoning them to unite in a single, massive army that could be used to crush their foes and compel the government to grant emancipation. Everything in their experience suggested as much; it seemed to fit the only cultural template they possessed.

This was not the first time that factions in the area had ended their feuds. The ebbing and flowing of factional activity during the early nineteenth century was part of a familiar alternating pattern. In 1810 the Caravat–Shanavest conflict was transformed into a Whiteboy campaign during which, as the lord lieutenant put it, those factions 'laid aside their private animosities and were united in a general system of outrage and opposition to the law'.[45] The same thing happened at the outbreak of the Rockite insurrection in 1822: faction fighting all but ceased in Munster when Captain Rock appeared, said one observer, because the war against a mutual enemy 'reconciles and unites in the pursuit of a common object'.[46] Towards the close of the Rockite disturbances an army officer stationed in Limerick told a parliamentary committee: 'I really think that ... [local factions] all are sworn that if there was anything to break out against the government or against the state, that then they would all unite and be of one party'. It followed that some people in authority might wish to encourage faction feuds and thereby divert people from engaging in full-scale insurrections. 'I have heard gentlemen of the county say, and magistrates,' the same officer testified, 'that it was a good sign to see the lower classes at war with each other, for then it was not to be supposed that they were combining against the state'.[47] Or, as a journalist reported from Tipperary in 1828, 'the speech of an

[44]'O'Connell's victory', translated by Douglas Hyde, *Songs ascribed to Raftery* (Shannon, 1973), p. 271.

[45]*A statement of the nature and extent of the disturbances which have lately prevailed in Ireland* ..., p. 13, H.C. 1816 (479), ix, 581.

[46]Blackburne testimony, *Minutes of evidence taken before the select committee* ..., pp 18–19, H.C. 1825 (20), vii. See also Michael Beames, *Peasants and power: the Whiteboy movements and their control in pre-Famine Ireland* (New York, 1983), p. 71.

[47]Testimony of Maj. Richard Willcocks, *Minutes of evidence taken before the select committee* ..., p. 113, H.C. 1825 (20), vii.

Irish legislator has long since passed into a proverb — "while there is a fight at a fair there will never be a rebellion" '.[48]

Given this recurrent cycle of faction fighting and Whiteboyism, it was almost predictable that the Catholic population in this area would interpret O'Connell's appeal for factional peace in 1828 as a rallying-cry for a grand military crusade. He was signalling to them, or so it appeared, to prepare for the greatest Whiteboy insurrection of all. This scenario also fitted well with the millenarian prophesies of Pastorini which had swept through the region a decade earlier and which had nourished the Rockite disturbances of 1822–4. These compelling predictions of the imminent destruction of Protestantism had aroused hopes and expectations that were not quickly forgotten and that could be easily rekindled.[49]

The attitudes of those who participated in the pacification movement cannot be reconstructed from speeches or written statements that any of them made, because such evidence is virtually non-existent. We can, however, glimpse their intentions in other ways. They were suggested when the factions of Croom gathered around a bonfire and swore 'that in future there should be known in the country but one party' or when Three Year Olds and the Four Year Olds of Kilteely, County Limerick, announced that they were merging their two groups into a new body that would be known henceforth as the Seven Year Olds. They were also implied in the way that marchers — the most prominent being veterans of faction wars — dubbed themselves 'O'Connell's Militia' or paraded openly in white shirts, the emblem of the Whiteboys.[50] A poem of this period by Tomás Rua Ó Súilleabháin also spoke to such sentiments. The poet-narrator, seeing that the Catholics appeared to be girding themselves for war, asks a beautiful woman, Úna, whether O'Connell was ready to lead them into battle:

> Tá an Catoilic trúp ina bhfoirinn i dtiúin,
> Ag feitheamh ar chuntas éigin,
> Ó fochtar na cúige go huachtar Mumhan,
> Chum preabadh go humhal le chéile.
>
> [The Catholic troop has arrayed harmoniously,
> From the north to the south of Munster,

[48]*Morning Herald*, 30 Sept. 1828. See also William Smith to Maj. W. Miller, 21 July 1828 (P.R.O., HO 100/222/481). For evidence of this pattern at the time of the 1798 rebellion see Kevin Whelan. 'The republic in the village: the United Irishmen, the Enlightenment and popular culture' in his *The Tree of Liberty: radicalism, Catholicism and the construction of Irish identity, 1760–1830* (Cork, 1996), pp 90–92.

[49]James S. Donnelly, jr, 'Pastorini and Captain Rock: millenarianism and sectarianism in the Rockite movement of 1821–4' in Clark and Donnelly (eds), *Irish peasants*, pp 102–39.

[50]Walter Hussey to Maj. Thomas Vokes, 17 July 1828 (P.R.O., H.O., 100/221/98); Pückler-Muskau, *Tour*, ii, 8; William Sadlier to William Gregory, 31 July 1828 (N.A.I., C.S.O., R.P. 1828, T–20). The colour white was also symbolic of justice.

Waiting for a definite report
To spring into concerted action simultaneously.][51]

Thomas Wyse travelled through County Tipperary in August and was appalled to discover that people there

had greatly misapprehended the objects of the Association and in many instances could not be convinced that they had recommended the suppression of all former divisions and discords with any other view than to prepare the people for a general and united insurrectionary movement. 'When will he call us out?' was more than once heard in the streets of Clonmel . . . and frequently answered with the finger on the mouth and a significant smile and wink from the by-standers. Many of these peasants too had arms concealed in the mountains near the town and reserved for the coming occasion with great caution and assiduity.[52]

The most vivid expressions of such attitudes were the symbolic devices employed by demonstrators in the celebrations accompanying the faction truces. There had been a martial flavour to the gatherings from the very start — people marched to fifes and drums, they paraded three, four or six abreast and in segregated companies of horse and foot — but their aggressiveness became more explicit as the meetings progressed, particularly from the last week of August onwards. Ironically, this shift to more militant imagery stemmed directly from another of O'Connell's speeches. Addressing the Munster members of the Catholic Association at their annual provincial meeting in Clonmel on 25 August, he turned to the subject of Protestant extremists and alluded to the recent 'pacification' demonstrations: 'Let Lord [Lieutenant] Anglesey but give me a commission,' he exclaimed, 'and in Tipperary alone I shall raise as many brave fellows in one day, ay, in a single hour, as would drive the Orange army into the sea. Oh! what fun we should have in licking them!'[53]

To the thousands of 'brave Tipperary fellows' who had been ending their feuds in the belief that they were preparing for a decisive war, here was the near equivalent of a formal call to arms. Within days marchers in Newport appeared in a new kind of costume: women's red shawls were pinned around their waists in imitation of military sashes, and many wore identical green jackets lined with white.[54] Such garb became increasingly common over the weeks that followed. An army officer who watched the massive Clonmel demonstration on 21 September described how every group in the enormous parade 'had a leader to about every 30 men with 4 banners emblematic of the Parish or District from which the Party came'. He was

[51] *Amhráin Thomáis Ruaidh .i. the songs of Tomás Ruadh O'Sullivan*. ed. James Fenton (Dublin, 1922), pp 78–9. I am grateful to Kevin Whelan for this translation. See also Ríonach Uí Ógáin, *Immortal Dan: Daniel O'Connell in Irish folk tradition* (Dublin, 1995), p. 89.

[52] Wyse, *Catholic association*, i, 413–14.

[53] *D.E.P.*, 28 Aug. 1828.

[54] Monthly report of Maj. Samson Carter, 2 Oct. 1828 (N.A.I., C.S.O., R.P. 1828, C–49).

particularly struck by one mounted contingent of sixty men who 'wore a regular uniform consisting of a green jacket braided with white lace, something like a hussar jacket & white trowsers with a green stripe down the seams. They had besides a farrier in uniform attached to them with a horse shoe and three chevrons in silver on his arm.'[55] In this and other demonstrations marchers sported jackets that were set off by epaulettes, shoulder knots, chevrons that designated their ranks, and patches that bore the motto 'King George and O'Connell'. Those in command wore four-cornered green officers' caps with tassels on the ends; some headgear featured white feathers tipped with red in imitation of British infantry regiments.[56]

Other features of the demonstrations assumed a more truculent appearance in the aftermath of O'Connell's speech of 25 August. Parade banners, which had hitherto carried short, ambiguous slogans ('Peace and Tranquillity', 'Erin Go Bragh', 'Be True', 'God Save the King') or simple designs such as a harp capped with a crown, now became more concrete and combative in their imagery. The Clonmel procession was led by several men carrying an eight-foot by eleven-foot standard that showed O'Connell presenting an emancipation petition to George IV, who spoke the words 'Peace to Men of Goodwill'. Significantly, its obverse side boldly featured a large harp without the crown.[57] Another contingent in the same parade displayed a flag showing a group of prominent figures, among them the lord lieutenant and O'Connell leaning on his horse and pointing to a crown that lay on the ground beneath a harp.[58] A device that appeared in the Clogheen demonstration the following week showed the figures of George IV and O'Connell standing beneath the motto 'God Save the King', but, as one disgruntled observer pointed out, 'the word "King" rested immediately above the head of O'Connell'.[59]

IV

Imagery such as this exemplified the way that, to use Wyse's phrase, people 'misapprehended the objects' of the Catholic Association. But what were those objects, and what role, if any, did the association play in the pacification process? O'Connell and his colleagues were primarily intent upon stifling factional violence and checking the influence of the various fighting

[55]Maj. A. Lane to the earl of Wiltshire, 25 Sept. 1828 (N.A.I., S.O.C., 2883/21).

[56]*Tipperary Vindicator*, 18 Jan. 1845; C. Darby to Leveson-Gower, 18 Sept. 1828 (B.L., Add. MS 40335, ff 109–10); W. Chaytor to Leveson-Gower, 22 Sept. 1828 (N.A.I., C.S.O., R.P. 1828, T–28); W. Nash to Maj. Samson Carter, 22 Sept. 1828 (ibid.); deposition of G. Fitzgerald, 27 Sept. 1828 (ibid., F-16); Pückler-Muskau, *Tour*, ii, 7–8. See also earl of Donoughmore to Maj. Gosset, 22 Sept. 1828 (B.L., Add. MS 40326, ff 67–70); anonymous note, Birr, 24 Sept. 1828 (N.A.I., C.S.O., R.P. 1828, P–16); *L.E.P./C.S.*, 3 Oct. 1828; *The Times*, 7 Oct. 1828; Wyse, *Catholic association*, i, 413.

[57]*T.F.P.*, 24 Sept. 1828; *Clonmel Herald*, 24 Sept. 1828.

[58]John Cooke to Leveson-Gower, 22 Sept. 1828 (N.A.I., C.S.O., R.P. 1828, T–28); affidavit of John Middleton, 27 Sept. 1828 (ibid.).

[59]*Clonmel Herald*, 1 Oct. 1828.

groups in the countryside. This remained their objective, and, in comparison with the efforts of the magistracy, they enjoyed considerable success. Their achievement owed in part to a unique strategy that they employed throughout the summer of 1828.

As noted above, the leaders of the Catholic Association created a quasi-chivalric order at the commencement of the Clare election campaign which they called the Liberators of Ireland. Its *raison d'être* was to honour individuals who had performed notable duties for their country, and one of its main purposes was to quell faction feuds and Whiteboyism.[60] O'Connell, who had a curious attraction to societies of this kind (especially their costumes and regalia), patterned this body upon a similar organisation that Simon Bolivar had established a few years earlier in South America.[61] Like their Latin counterparts, all members of the Liberators were to receive a specially designed medal which they were to wear attached to a green ribbon on public occasions. These medals had been conspicuous during the Clare election when leaders of the Catholic Association wore them on the streets of Ennis as badges of identification. One of the badges was the focus of a well-publicised confrontation between the sheriff of Clare and O'Connell's colleague, James O'Gorman Mahon. When the latter stepped forward to nominate O'Connell for the Clare seat, the sheriff ordered him to remove his Liberator medal because it was a 'party badge'. O'Gorman Mahon replied: 'I have the ensign of my country displayed around my neck and never shall it be taken from me but with my life . . . I will not lower this green badge as long as I have an arm to protect it!' The sheriff eventually gave way.[62] Following O'Connell's victory, the medals were distributed as tokens of thanks to each of the freeholders who had cast their votes for him. The close identification of the medallions with the stirring events of the election made them potent symbolic weapons in the Catholic Association's efforts to subdue the Munster factions.[63]

A good example of their effectiveness can be seen in the way they were used to reconcile two Tipperary factions, the Coffeys and Reiskevellas, who dominated the area around Castleconnell and Newport. These groups had ignored O'Connell's appeal for factional peace, and following a particularly large and bloody clash between them in late July, concerned local people solicited the help of the Catholic Association in Dublin to end their feud. A short time later two of that body's more eminent figures, O'Gorman Mahon

[60] *D.E.P.*, 4, 8 July 1826, 26 July 1828. See also Oliver Snoddy, 'The Order of Liberators' in *N. Munster Antiq. Jn.*, x, no. 1 (1966), pp 34–6.

[61] Oliver MacDonagh, *Hereditary bondsman*, pp 176–7; Fergus O'Ferrall, 'Daniel O'Connell, the "Liberator," 1775–1847: changing images' in Brian P. Kennedy and Raymond Gillespie (eds), *Ireland: art into history* (Dublin, 1994), pp 94–5; *F.J.*, 11 Jan. 1845.

[62] *D.E.P.*, 3 July 1828.

[63] Liberator medals can be seen in contemporary cartoons and drawings relating to the election. See 'The humble candidate', repr. in O'Ferrall, 'The "Liberator" ', p. 96, and Daniel Maclise's portrait of O'Gorman Mahon in James Kelly, *'That damn'd thing called honour': duelling in Ireland, 1570–1860* (Cork, 1995), p. 254. There is one in the collection of the National Museum of Ireland.

and Thomas Steele, made their way to Newport, and on Sunday 17 August they presided over a remarkable night meeting in that town's imposing chapel. After pointing out the evils of violence and the benefits of peace, O'Gorman Mahon and Steele called forward the parish curate, Father O'Shaughnessy, and inducted him into the Order of Liberators by placing a medal around his neck. He in turn summoned two of the leaders of the Coffeys and Reiskevellas, who knelt before him, pledged themselves to live in peace, kissed a crucifix, and accepted medals that signified their induction into the Liberators. The former enemies then proceeded to the altar, 'embraced each other and exchanged [their] medals in token of future friendship'. This ritual was repeated for another ten pairs of faction chiefs, who took the ceremony very seriously indeed. One participant, for example, was a young man named Ryan who had lost two fingers in the recent faction battle. Because his wound had not yet healed, a witness recounted, 'his late opponent was taking him by the uninjured hand. "No", said Ryan, offering the other, "it is with this one I'll shake hands with you, my boy", thus declaring through his very wounds, friendship and oblivion of wrong.' Another participant was an older man whose nephew had been killed in factional warfare. The same reporter described how

> he was brought reluctantly to the Altar by his friends and, when solicited to make an offering of his feelings, 'I will not', he said, 'they brutally murdered my nephew. They killed him by a blow in a fair fight — but [then] they fired several shots through his body and, not satisfied with that they broke his legs and thighs — I must have justice of them.' Being remonstrated with . . . he did kneel to make the pledge but when the crucifix was tendered to him he became very much agitated and, rising from his knees said he would not go against his conscience, he would not perjure his soul, he should have justice of them . . . but being reasoned with after a long struggle, he again knelt down and . . . vowed future peace and friendship with the slayers of his nephew.[64]

The Catholic Association supplied Liberator medals for use in other reconciliation ceremonies. O'Connell had four of them sent specially to the leaders of the Magpies and Blackhens in Toomevara and the Cummings and Darrigs of Dunkerrin. The leaders of the factions who paraded at the head of their followers in the Thurles and Templemore demonstrations displayed them conspicuously; so did Patrick Ryan and Thomas Kelly, who led the two factions which made peace before a crowd of 10,000 at Holycross.[65]

For all of their usefulness, however, the role of Liberator medals in these events — like the role of the Catholic Association itself — should not be exaggerated. They were helpful but by no means essential to the pacification process. Association leaders were quick to claim sole credit for reconciling

[64] *L.E.P./C.S.*, 12 Aug. 1828. See also ibid., 25 July, 5 Aug. 1828; *D.E.P.*, 14, 23 Aug. 1828; *Clonmel Advertiser*, 23 Aug. 1828. An antecedent to this ceremony had taken place two years earlier in Waterford, where the first branch of the Order of Liberators was founded: see *Waterford Chronicle*, 2, 19 Sept. 1826; *D.E.P.*, 4, 8 July, 8 Aug. 1826.

[65] *D.E.P.*, 12 July, 9 Sept. 1828; *Waterford Mirror*, 6 Sept. 1828; *T.F.P.*, 13, 17 Sept. 1828.

the various factions, and to the extent that O'Connell's appeal for peace in Toomevara can be said to have touched off the reconciliations, they were correct.[66] But except for sending down Liberator medals to the heads of a few factions and O'Connell's braggadocio in late August about using brave Tipperary boys to lick the Orangemen, the association as an organisation was not involved in the movement.

Some of its rank-and-file members helped to plan demonstrations in the towns where they lived, but its national leaders certainly had nothing to do with running any of the events. Only one member of the Dublin executive is known to have witnessed any of the gatherings first-hand, and what he saw obviously alarmed him. Richard Lalor Sheil watched the marchers in the large Borrisoleigh meeting on 24 August, and he reported to his colleagues in Dublin a few days later how their numbers, their discipline and their unusual attire 'conveyed to my mind much melancholy intimation'. He was frightened, he said, 'to think for an instant upon the simultaneous rising up of such a peasantry as I have lately beheld . . . the peasantry of the South might by a single spark be ignited into explosion. We should watch them as we would a mass of [gun]powder.'[67]

The demonstrations were, from start to finish, locally organised and locally run; no outside agencies, least of all the central executive of the Catholic Association, determined the form that they took. In fact, as the meetings became larger and more militant in appearance during September, the association distanced itself from them while calling for their cessation. 'Neither we nor the clergy have called these meetings,' Sheil protested to his colleagues following the massive demonstrations on 21 September. 'We may have prepared the public mind and rendered it susceptible of the feelings from which these meetings derive their origin,' he declared, 'but we have not called them . . . Mark me then. We have not called the strange meetings which have recently appeared; and let us in time, and while the dispositions of the people are still under our dominion, let us forbid the recurrence.'[68]

Whether, in fact, the demonstrators were ever 'under the dominion' of the Catholic Association to the extent that Sheil assumed is another matter entirely. There are hints of local resistance in the way that marchers responded to occasional promptings from the association not to display provocative symbols. People not only ignored such suggestions, they resented the interference of outsiders in activities that they considered entirely their own business.[69] One prominent association member who returned to Dublin from Tipperary in late September reported to his colleagues that while there was general support in that region for their organ-

[66]See speech of O'Gorman Mahon to the Catholic Association (*D.E.P.*, 26 Aug. 1828); Richard Lalor Sheil's speech to the association (ibid., 2 Sept. 1828); Thomas Wyse's assessment (*Catholic association*, i, 411–12). For a negative interpretation of O'Connell's appeal to the factions see Walter Cox, *The cuckoo calendar: anecdotes of the Liberator* (Dublin, 1833), p. 22.

[67]*D.E.P.*, 2 Sept. 1828.

[68]Ibid., 27 Sept. 1828. See also *Morning Register*, 3 Oct. 1828.

[69]*D.E.P.*, 9 Sept. 1828; *L.E.P./C.S.*, 24 Oct. 1828.

isation, 'when Gentlemen stated their objections in that room against particular acts of the Country People, they ought to be cautious how they expressed themselves. It was his firm conviction that were it not for the opposition given to the wishes of the People by some members of their own Body, there would not have been so many processions in the County of Tipperary.'[70]

V

Although the leaders of the Catholic Association did not instigate or run the demonstrations, they took an active part in the dramatic events surrounding their suppression. From the end of August onwards, they and other outsiders began to voice mounting fears that the demonstrations might spark a violent confrontation between Catholics and Orangemen. Sheil was apprehensive that the march he had witnessed in Borrisoleigh would antagonise Protestants in a region known for its virulent anti-Catholicism.[71] 'Rebellion!' exclaimed a local Orangeman to Prince Pückler-Muskau in September, 'that's the point at which I want to see them . . . and to which they must be led on . . . for there can be no peace in Ireland till the whole race is exterminated, and nothing but an open rebellion, and an English army to put it down, can effect this!'[72] The extreme Protestant press treated its readers to similar apocalyptic visions. One Clonmel paper concluded its report of the huge pacification demonstration that had just taken place in that town in the following dramatic language:

> The tempest is up — the rain is already descending — and all the power of the remorseless and sanguinary agitators, and all the conciliatory and temporising plans and expedients of the most liberal Government cannot stop its already blood-marked course. British valour and British prowess alone will subdue it when its streams, crimsoned with human gore and pestilential in its exhalations, shall have covered this unhappy land with desolation.[73]

Meanwhile Protestants in Munster and other parts of the country were signing up by the thousand in newly formed Brunswick Clubs whose purpose was to hold the line against Catholic challenges to the constitution.

Protestant fears fed increasingly upon conspicuous displays of Catholic triumphalism: anti-Orange tunes were heard more frequently in the 'league of peace' parades, whose routes were chosen intentionally to include constabulary barracks, the homes of town mayors and Protestant churches. 'The lower orders talk openly of their strength', declared one worried Tipperary landowner following a reconciliation gathering in his neighbourhood at the end of September, 'and boast that they would have destroyed the police'. He was shocked to hear local children refer to the green-uniformed marchers

[70] *D.E.P.*, 27 Sept. 1828.
[71] Ibid., 2, 27 Sept. 1828.
[72] Pückler-Muskau, *Tour*, i, 257.
[73] *Clonmel Herald*, 24 Sept. 1828.

as 'the warriors' who would kill the Protestants. On the day after the demonstration he received an anonymous letter which boasted that 'the day is our own and we are just beginning to show it'.[74]

The most provocative and potentially dangerous act of all, however, was the event that Catholics in north Tipperary planned for Sunday 28 September. This was to be a massive gathering of between 50,000 and 100,000 people in the town of Borrisokane. Yet Borrisokane was not the main objective of the demonstrators: before meeting there they intended to parade *en masse* through the town of Shinrone some ten miles away. In so doing, they hoped to turn the tables on the residents of that predominantly Protestant town who were known for their boisterous Orange celebrations every 12th of July. As local observers claimed, the Catholic procession down the main street of Shinrone was meant to show its residents 'how insignificant they were when compared with the multitudes that their narrow policy sought to keep in thralldom' and to show the country at large 'that they were not afraid to assemble any where they pleased'. It was to be a flagrant assertion of new-born Catholic power, a visible redefinition of the term 'Irish people' in its political sense. For their part, the residents prepared to resist the Catholics with force of arms: they gathered scores of guns, stockpiled thousands of rounds of ammunition, barricaded their doors, and removed the sashes from their upper windows 'so as to convert the latter into embrasures for the use of musketry and other firearms'. As they did so infantry and cavalry detachments arrived in the town under orders to prevent the parade from passing through. Shinrone looked set to become the arena for the bloodletting that many had feared and that some had welcomed.[75]

In the face of these developments, a solicitor from Birr, Thomas Lalor Cooke, and the parish priest of that town, Father Patrick Kennedy, took it upon themselves to stop the march. Cooke later described how he and Kennedy persuaded people in Birr and Roscrea not to take part, and how they in turn agreed 'to become a sort of special constables' who would stop people from no fewer than five counties passing through their towns on their way to the demonstration. 'Had each Green-boy but carried away a single pebble,' Cooke later wrote, 'a vestige of the devoted town [i.e. Shinrone] would not remain, so great were the numbers of those men about to visit it'. The next morning, the day of the demonstration, he and Kennedy convinced groups in two other places to relinquish their plans to march. Cooke described what happened at one of them: 'The women here were the first to strip off their own darling green ribbons and handkerchiefs and then they helped the men to follow their example. In some instances, the women with great good sense and remarkable self-devotion, forcibly tore the green ribbons off their unwilling male friends in the Chapel.' The two men then hurried off to Shinrone, where, a mere quarter of a mile from the town and its

[74]Richard Falkiner to Anglesey, 30 Sept. 1828 (N.A.I., C.S.O., R.P. 1828, F–15).

[75][Thomas Lalor Cooke], 'Reminiscences of the Green Boys of 1828 — from a correspondent in Roscrea' in *Tipperary Vindicator*, 18 Jan. 1845 (repr. in Cooke's *The early history of the town of Birr or Parsonstown* (Dublin, 1875; repr. Tullamore, 1990), pp 191–208); William Nash to Maj. Samson Carter, 22 Sept. 1828 (N.A.I., C.S.O., R.P. 1828, T–28).

waiting Orangemen, they intercepted and turned back a contingent of some 2,500 self-styled 'Green-Boys' and 'Green-Girls' who were unaware that the demonstration had been cancelled.[76]

Meanwhile the Catholic Association in Dublin published and distributed an urgent appeal to the Catholics of Tipperary to give up their marches.[77] Hard on its heels came a similar request from O'Connell himself, who, significantly, held out the possibility of resuming the demonstrations at a later date: 'The time is come to discontinue these public meetings', he wrote; 'for the present year let us have no more of them. HALT, therefore my beloved friends — HALT my dear brothers. I give you the word of command, HALT, and for the present, let those public and general meetings be discontinued.' These actions, together with the royal proclamation against further marches that appeared on 1 October, combined to bring the demonstrations to an end.[78]

VI

Thomas Bartlett has identified three forces that were crucial to the politicisation of Ireland's Catholic rural population in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: sociability ('the growing pressure to associate for various purposes'), militarisation and sectarianisation.[79] Each of these forces was revealed more vividly and became more tightly intertwined in the pacification gatherings of 1828 than in any other public events between the Act of Union and the Great Famine. They provide a convenient framework for looking briefly at some other features of the demonstrations.

As Bartlett shows, the various occasions which traditionally brought large numbers of Irish people together — markets, fairs, sporting events, patterns, wakes, funerals and even the activities of factions and secret societies — became increasingly politicised after 1790. These were, in effect, modes of public expression or 'languages' of political association that Munster people in 1828 instinctively drew upon and adapted to express their feelings about

[76]Cooke, 'Reminiscences'. On similar efforts by other local people see Lord Oxmantown to Leveson-Gower, 25 Sept. 1828 (B.L., Add. MS 40335, f. 165); Leveson-Gower to Oxmantown, 26 Sept. 1828 (ibid., f. 166); Oxmantown to Leveson-Gower, 29 Sept. 1828 (N.A.I., C.S.O., R.P. 1828, P–16).

[77]It also dispatched O'Gorman Mahon and Steele to Tipperary to persuade people to halt the meetings (*T.F.P.*, 4 Oct. 1828).

[78]Adding to the atmosphere of crisis were the deaths on 23 September of two Catholics at the hands of Orangemen in Ballybay, County Monaghan. On the appeals of the Catholic Association and O'Connell see *D.E.P.*, 27 Sept. 1828; 'Address to the honest & worthy people of the County Tipperary', 30 Sept. 1828 (Dublin Diocesan Archives, Murray papers, section 60/1, file ii, no. 7 (printed in part in *T.F.P.*, 11 Oct. 1828)). On the background to the issuance of the royal proclamation and its aftermath see B.L., Add. MSS 40335–6, *passim*; Maj. William Miller to Leveson-Gower, 7 Nov. 1828 (N.A.I., C.S.O., R.P. 1828, D–86).

[79]Thomas Bartlett, *The fall and rise of the Irish nation: the Catholic question, 1690–1830* (Dublin, 1992), pp 311–26.

events that meant a great deal to them: O'Connell's victory, the cessation of factional wars, and the mustering of an army-in-waiting.

Reports of the demonstrations repeatedly note the good-natured crowds, the carnival-like atmosphere and the way that marchers resembled mummers, wren-boys and other figures associated with more familiar festivities. They also reveal the way in which these events were exemplary *rites de passage* as defined by Arnold van Gennep, Victor Turner and others. Like reconciliation ceremonies between warring factions in other cultures, these events were cloaked in rituals that facilitated the transition from war to peace. These included displays of mock hostility, tree-planting ceremonies on the sites of former battlegrounds, communal eating, drinking and the recitation of prayers. In the same way that we have seen heads of certain factions exchange Liberator medals, leaders of the Blackhens and Magpies gave each other live birds that represented their respective parties. In some instances factions which had already made peace travelled to other districts and presided as 'ritual elders' over the reconciliation of groups which were still at war.[80]

Like other events that drew various segments of the rural population together, these attracted participants from an array of social groups. Speakers at the meetings included solicitors, schoolmasters, substantial farmers, brewers, publicans and shopkeepers.[81] Descriptions of the larger marches also describe 'respectable' farmers or 'the better order of farmers' appearing on horseback at the head of their tenants and labourers in the processions, and while some observers claimed that they did so out of a desire to be 'first among the village politicians' or from fear of reprisals if they refused, it is clear that many took part willingly and enthusiastically.[82] These men were members of the Catholic big-farmer class which had prospered during the war years of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and which comprised the chief support of the emergent nationalist project of the 1820s. Although they were newly risen, in Kevin Whelan's words, they 'had acquired an older cultural mantle which they now wove

[80] *L.E.P./C.S.*, 15 July 1828; William Smith to Maj. William Miller, 21 July 1828 (P.R.O., HO 100/222/481); Thomas Doolan to Miller, 20 Sept. 1828 (ibid., HO 100/222/479); *The Times*, 29 Aug. 1828; *T.F.P.*, 17 Sept. 1828; *F.J.*, 6 Sept. 1828. On *rites de passage* see especially Arnold van Gennep, *The rites of passage* (London, 1960); Victor W. Turner, *The ritual process* (London, 1969). For similarities with pacification rituals in other cultures see Jacob Black-Michaud, *Cohesive force: feud in the Mediterranean and Middle East* (Oxford, 1975), pp 91–2.

[81] Edward Wilson to Leveson-Gower, 2 Sept. 1828 (P.R.O., HO 100/222/317–18); deposition of James McDonagh, 25 Sept. 1828 (N.A.I., C.S.O., R.P. 1828, T–28); William Nash to Maj. Samson Carter, 22 Sept. 1828 (ibid.); deposition of Edward Hurt, 4 Oct. 1828 (ibid., F–16).

[82] Maj. Abraham Lane to the earl of Wiltshire, 25 Sept. 1828 (N.A.I., S.O.C., 2883/21); James Ryan to Sir William Gregory, 24 Sept. 1828 (N.A.I., C.S.O., R.P. 1828, R–7); Richard Falkiner to Anglesey, 30 Sept. 1828 (ibid., F–15); *The Times*, 27 Sept. 1828; earl of Donoughmore to Lt-Col. Gosset, 22 Sept. 1828 (B.L., Add. MS 40326, ff 67–70); *T.F.P.*, 24 Sept. 1828, on the involvement of Richard Grubb, a wealthy corn merchant.

seamlessly into their own self-image. They constructed themselves not as a peasant class but as proprietors-in-waiting who would reclaim a patrimony of which their ancestors had been unjustly stripped.'[83] This process of self-fashioning could not have been more strikingly expressed than in the reconciliation marches of 1828. Attired in impressive green uniforms and fitted out with sashes, epaulettes, officers' caps and other accoutrements of leadership, these ancestral lords *manqués* rode proudly before their tenantry as thousands of their neighbours cheered them on.

Other men who acted as 'officers' in the later demonstrations had actually seen service in the army, some of it in action against the French more than a decade earlier. The role of veterans in the demonstrations was not surprising, given that in the years 1760–1820 perhaps one out of six adult Irish males had spent time in uniform.[84] Their contribution to the pacification marches was unmistakable, and it reflected the broader process of militarisation that was at work among the rural Catholic population. Shortly after the demonstrations ended, a local landowner reflected:

> Whatever may have been the object of these meetings, the effect must have been to introduce a very formidable system of military training. They were taught by it to march in order, to obey the captain of their parish, and to concentrate upon a given point in immense numbers. It enabled them to avail themselves of the instruction of the many disbanded soldiers in every part of the country and it must have had the effect of giving them a degree of confidence in their own strength.[85]

The military images that permeated the later demonstrations — the uniforms, the banners, the men of fighting age and reputation marching in step to the commands of experienced officers — conveyed a number of messages and meanings. To the participants they were expressions of triumphalism, assertiveness and earnest expectation; they also recalled the excitement of the war years, 1793–1815, when thousands of young Catholics served in the Irish militia, a body that many looked upon as the army of the Catholic 'nation'.[86] To outsiders they suggested impending deeds of blood. In a wider context, they can be seen as challenges to the very foundations of authority. By adopting the dress and manners of soldiers, Catholics of the lowest ranks were symbolically inverting dominant institutions and values. In so doing, they became actors in a form of counter-theatre that defied as it parodied one of the most familiar and potent expressions of state hegemony. Such activities call to mind what E. P. Thompson once identified as a 'contest for symbolic authority' that was being fought out between the landed élite and the labouring poor in Britain at about this time: a contest 'in which rulers and crowd needed each other, watched each other, per-

[83]Kevin Whelan, 'An underground gentry?: Catholic middlemen in eighteenth-century Ireland' in his *The Tree of Liberty*, p. 54.

[84]Bartlett, *Fall & rise*, p. 322.

[85]Lord Oxmantown to Leveson-Gower, 29 Sept. 1828 (N.A.I., C.S.O., R.P. 1828, P–16).

[86]Bartlett, *Fall & rise*, p. 326.

formed theatre and counter-theatre to each other's auditorium, moderated each other's political behaviour'.[87]

Inversion rituals have often served as potent weapons of resistance in the hands of subordinated groups in many cultures. In the case of the pacification rallies, such transgressive acts were not restricted to military matters; they also extended to constabulary functions. The gatherings touched off only one violent incident, and that occurred late on the final day of the demonstrations when a handful of homeward-bound participants passed near a constabulary barracks in Castletown-Arra, County Tipperary, and became involved in a scuffle with a police constable which led to a destructive riot. Otherwise the demonstrations themselves were notable for their sobriety and peacefulness — attributes that stemmed mainly from the self-discipline of participants and the efforts of special 'police', who were themselves marchers or Catholic shopkeepers in the towns where the celebrations took place. These men patrolled public houses on the days of demonstrations and turned out people whom they found drinking after hours; they punished drunks by ducking them in rivers or putting their heads under town pumps; they even clapped unruly men in town watch-houses. They also made sure that no one carried sticks, clubs or other items that could be construed as weapons (the only exception being the sharpened iron swords made from barrel-staves which, significantly enough, were carried in a few parades by harmless children).[88]

Even the production of items that marchers wore or carried in the parades could be interpreted as a subversive act. Journalists and magistrates described in almost obsessive detail the materials that demonstrators used to make their uniforms, decorations and banners; they carefully noted the estimated cost of these commodities and the various ways that money was raised to pay for them. James Vernon's observations about similar practices in England at this same time are applicable to the Munster marchers: 'individuals, including, it seems, even the poorest, were able to make their own icons with materials at hand — they could literally make their own visual politics. Unsurprisingly, this made both local and national officials distinctly uncomfortable, for they at least felt that these forms of visual iconography represented an autonomous popular politics.'[89]

The pacification gatherings were, by their very nature, sectarian events because they were ultimately concerned with the attainment of full rights for Catholics, if not the displacement of Protestant power. Being composed almost entirely of Catholics, the demonstrations were necessarily mass rites

[87]E. P. Thompson, 'The patricians and the plebs' in his *Customs in common* (London, 1993), p. 57 and *passim*. See also Barbara Babcock (ed.), *The reversible world: symbolic inversion in art and society* (Ithaca, 1978).

[88]*Clonmel Advertiser*, 4 Oct. 1828; *L.E.P./C.S.*, 3 Oct. 1828; Maj. Samson Carter to William Gregory, 7 Sept. 1828 (N.A.I., C.S.O., R.P. 1828, C–47); W. Chaytor to Leveson-Gower, 22 Sept. 1828 (ibid., T–28); deposition of William Pearce, 27 Sept. 1828 (ibid.); Lord Mount Cashel to Anglesey, 29 Sept. 1828 (B.L., Add. MS 40335, ff 218–19); *Saunders' Newsletter*, 24 Sept. 1828.

[89]James Vernon, *Politics and the people: a study in English political culture, c. 1815–1867* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 111.

of inclusion and exclusion; by symbolically representing the Catholic community, they automatically excluded, and in so doing defied (as they defined), the Protestant 'other'. Marchers drew instinctively upon the symbols and rituals of the Catholic church. They halted and knelt before Catholic chapels along their routes; conversely, they shouted and played anti-Orange tunes outside Protestant churches during divine services. They also exhibited large crosses in their parades, often draping them in black to represent the faithful in bondage. The appearance of crosses was reminiscent of crucifixes carried in Corpus Christi processions, but because those ceremonies were still prohibited by law, they also constituted subtle acts of defiance.

Despite such sectarian displays, the demonstrations exposed a certain disharmony between lay participants and their clergy. Priests played an active part in the earlier celebrations: they frequently acted as mediators in reconciliation ceremonies, they gave speeches to the crowds on the virtues of peace, and they were sometimes seen on horseback accompanying their congregations in processions. But as the demonstrations took on a more militant tone in late August, most of them did what they could to keep their parishioners at home.[90] In many if not most cases it was a losing battle. One nationalist newspaper lamented how 'the Catholic Clergymen have done everything in their power to stop these processions, but the country people will not listen to them or take their advice'.[91] When some priests intercepted a group of country people on their way to a pacification meeting in Cahir and urged them to go back, they were told 'no person but a bigot would interfere with the amusements of the poor'.[92] Other priests who tried to break up demonstrations were threatened with beatings.[93] On the outskirts of Clonmel a clergyman tried to stop marchers by drawing the figure of a cross in the road with a switch and saying: 'Let me see the man who will dare to pass that' — only to watch the crowd withdraw and enter the town by another route.[94] There are also indications that while older priests who were trained in France and who 'remembered '98 well' opposed the demonstrations, some younger clergymen actively supported them.[95]

VII

Viewed from one perspective, the pacification movement marked a turning-point in the murky history of Irish fighting factions. Factional warfare is commonly understood to have 'persisted with vigor' until the Famine, or at least until the late 1830s when reforms in the police and judicial systems and

[90]See, for example, *Clonmel Advertiser*, 24 Sept. 1828.
[91]*L.E.P./C.S.*, 3 Oct. 1828.
[92]Deposition of Gerald Fitzgerald, 27 Sept. 1828 (N.A.I., C.S.O., R.P. 1828, F–16).
[93]*The Times*, 6 Oct. 1828.
[94]*Evening Mail*, 6 Oct. 1828.
[95]Earl of Clare to Leveson-Gower, 10 Sept. 1828 (P.R.O., HO 100/222/346–7); Joseph Crampton to T. P. Vokes, 15 Sept. 1828 (N.A.I., C.S.O., R.P. 1828, V–12); *Clonmel Herald*, 20 Sept. 1828.

the impact of Father Theobald Mathew's temperance crusade combined to reduce its ferocity.[96] The events of 1828 would suggest that this process began almost a decade earlier than conventional wisdom would have it and that it was undertaken by the factions themselves. The truces that they concluded that summer not only ended factional brawling in the region for a few months, but most of them appear to have held and many of the factions disappeared for good. New factions sometimes emerged in their place, but their quarrels do not appear to have been conducted with the same intensity or on the same scale as previously.[97]

Viewed from another perspective, the pacification demonstrations of 1828 can tell us much about the development of mass politics in the early nineteenth century. During the first four years of its existence the Catholic Association demonstrated remarkable skill in mobilising vast numbers of people. But it was still improvising as it went along, and it lacked experience and knowledge in many areas. This was shown in its handling of the Munster factions. The association naturally wished to loosen the grip that these groups had upon people's loyalties and to insert itself more deeply into the life of the district. A convenient opportunity to do this presented itself at the time of the Clare election when popular emotions and expectations were at their highest. But through insensitivity to traditional modes of behaviour in the region, the association failed to anticipate that people would instinctively read O'Connell's call for factional peace as a summons to a grand military crusade. Factions and their supporters constructed his appeal in these terms because their history, their culture — their versions of 'local knowledge' — admitted of no other response.

Their actions also suggest that the Catholic Association did not control the behaviour of ordinary Catholics to the degree that the leaders of that body, not to mention historians, sometimes asserted. O'Connell and his colleagues were surprised and, in the end, horrified by the scale and potential power of the demonstrations. In their reactions we catch glimpses of the cultural gulf dividing O'Connellite nationalism from the unstructured, inchoate but no less sophisticated notions of national consciousness that energised Whiteboyism, a movement whose fringes blended imperceptibly into those of the fighting factions.[98] Luke Gibbons and David Lloyd have

[96]James W. O'Neill, 'Popular culture and peasant rebellion in pre-Famine Ireland' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Minnesota, 1984), p. 154; Donnelly, 'Factions', pp 125–7; *Minutes of evidence taken before the select committee of the House of Lords appointed to inquire into the state of Ireland since the year 1835, in respect of crime and outrage . . .*, pp 1084–91, H.L. 1839 (486–III), xi.

[97]See, for example, *T.F.P.*, 18 July, 1 Aug. 1829. Although press and constabulary reports from 1829 onwards suggest a diminution of factional activity and a virtual end of references to the factions which made peace in 1828, the extent to which this was so must await systematic research.

[98]The relationship between these movements suggests the Tillys' well-known model of changes in collective violence, Charles Tilly, Louise Tilly and Richard Tilly, *The rebellious century, 1830–1930* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975). See also S. J. Connolly, 'Violence and order in the eighteenth century' in Patrick O'Flanagan *et al.* (eds), *Rural Ireland, 1600–1900: modernisation and change* (Cork, 1987), pp 42–61.

recently made some perceptive observations about the differences separating these outlooks.[99] Lloyd notes, for example, that the rhetoric of O'Connell's nationalist project emphasised abstract national symbols such as Kathleen Ni Houlihan which, like other metaphoric constructions, aimed to subsume the particular into the universal; in this case, to inspire good nationalists 'to subordinate their private interests into the greater will of the nation'. By contrast, agrarian secret societies expressed themselves allegorically and metonymically — through such figures as 'Terry Alt's Mother', 'Queen Sive' or uniformed and beribboned faction fighters marching in military order — and in so doing stressed the local, the particular, the tangible. These qualities comprised 'a language of personal acquaintance' that was incompatible with the transcendent, totalising aspirations of the O'Connellite movement.[100] It was a language which grew increasingly muted in the course of the early nineteenth century and which, like the wider popular culture from which it sprang, was about to be changed profoundly.[101]

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[99]Luke Gibbons, 'Identity without a centre: allegory, history and Irish nationalism' in his *Transformations in Irish culture* (Cork, 1996), pp 134–47; David Lloyd, 'Violence and the constitution of the novel' in his *Anomalous states: Irish writing and the post-colonial moment* (Dublin, 1993), pp 125–55.

[100]Gibbons, 'Identity', p. 142; Lloyd, 'Violence', pp 146–9. See also Ranajit Guha, 'The prose of counter-insurgency' in Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (eds), *Selected subaltern studies* (New York & Oxford, 1988), pp 45–86.

[101]This article is a revised and expanded version of a paper read at the joint meeting of the American Conference for Irish Studies and the Canadian Association of Irish Studies at Queen's University, Belfast, in July 1995. I benefited at that time from the helpful comments of Sam Clark, Dermot McCarthy and Tom McGrath. I am particularly grateful to Kevin Whelan, who read a later version of the paper and offered many useful suggestions.

APPENDIX

Pacification demonstrations, 1828

Date		Place	Crowd estimates (low/high)
July	6	Toomevara (T)	n.a.
	6	Dunkerrin (K's)	n.a.
	7	Shanagolden (L)	n.a.
	7	Croom (L)	n.a.
	12	Athlacca (L)	4,000
	12	Dromin (L)	4,000
	13	Emly (L)	1,500
	13	Hospital (L)	1,500
	13	Knocklong (L)	n.a.
	14–15	Kilteely (L)	300–400
	18	Kilmihill (C)	n.a.
	20	Ballyscanlan (L)	n.a.
	20	Emly (L)	n.a.
	20	Hospital (L)	n.a.
	20	Dromin (L)	5,000–6,000
	27	Bansha (T)	600–700
	29	Knocklong (L)	n.a.
	?	Tipperary (T)	n.a.
	?	Kilfeacle (T)	n.a.
August	3	Golden (T)	4,000/10,000
	3	New Inn (T)	n.a.
	3	Knockgraffon (T)	n.a.
	3	Castleconnell (L)	n.a.
	10	Cappawhite (T)	10,000
	10	Newport (T)	n.a.
	15	Croom (L)	n.a.
	17	Kilmanagh (K)	n.a.
	17	Clonoulty (T)	'thousands'
	24	Borrisoleigh (T)	10,000
	30	Carrigogunnell (L)	'thousands'
	31	Holycross (T)	4,000/10,000
	31	Thurles (T)	40,000
	31	Newport (T)	3,000
	31	Murroe (L)	n.a.
September	3–4	Shanagolden (L)	2,000–3,000
	4–6	Rathkeale (L)	n.a.
	7	Ballina (T)	n.a.
	7	Killaloe (C)	n.a.
	7	Cashel (T)	11,500/20,000
	7	Effin (L)	n.a.

Date		Place	Crowd estimates (low/high)
September	7	Askeaton (L)	n.a.
	14	New Inn (T)	5,000/8,000
	14	Cahir (T)	7,500/16,000
	14	Killenaule (T)	7,500/40,000
	14	Templemore (T)	6,000/15,000
	14	Pallaskenry (L)	n.a.
	14	Stonehall (L)	n.a.
	14	Castleconnell (L)	n.a.
	21	Clonmel (T)	12,000/50,000
	21	Tipperary (T)	50,000
	21	Roscrea (T)	10,000/30,000
	21	Nenagh (T)	23,000
	21	Fethard (T)	10,000
	21	Toomevara (T)	10,000
	28	Clogheen (T)	15,000/50,000
	28	Borrisokane (T)	n.a.
	28	Castleconnell (L)	'hundreds'

C = Clare
K = Kilkenny
K's = King's County
L = Limerick
T = Tipperary